USING DIGITAL STORYTELLING TO INCREASE SPEAKING IN EFL ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM SETTING

Presented to
The Graduate Program
of
Greensboro College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

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December 2020

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Abstract

Situated in the field of technology and language teaching and learning, this research - study explores the use of digital storytelling (DST) to increase speaking in English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The purpose of this research was primarily to investigate the impact of digital storytelling on EFL learners' speaking skills, reveal learners' benefits towards implementing this program and provide the EFL teachers with strategies during the process. The project presents strategies of how to use DST in the EFL classroom to provide a safe and comfortable environment and increase learners' oral performance. DST promotes active learning that encourages learners to take control of the way they communicate. In addition, DST allows teachers to become observers, facilitators, and tutors, who can provide learners with support and differentiated strategies to address the language. This project includes a professional development workshop to explore the benefits of DST and assist teachers in applying this approach in EFL classrooms.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family, my husband and daughter, for their endless love and extended support, and my beloved parents and siblings who have found a way to encourage and greatly motivate me throughout my life and through this period of studying and accomplishing my thesis.

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Michelle Plaisance without her assistance and great support this thesis would not have been possible. I would like to acknowledge and express my appreciation of these people for their invaluable contributions to the accomplishment of the current thesis. First, I wish to express my great gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Dr. Elena King for providing encouragement, thoughtful guidance, and helpful suggestions to perform well at my thesis. They both guided me with great patience and enlightened me on a new way of looking at language teaching.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The main purpose of teaching any language is for students to be able to communicate well. This research focuses on the use of digital storytelling techniques to support speaking ability first by explaining how storytelling techniques can support students' speaking ability. According to Fisher (1985), storytelling is a creative art form that has entertained and informed across centuries and cultures and its instructional potential continues to serve teachers.

Working as a world language teacher in my home country Costa Rica and now as a Spanish teacher in the United States has allowed me to observe and be aware of the needs and challenges that many learners from different backgrounds and ages face when learning a second language. I have worked with multiple ages and levels, and by providing techniques and strategies in using digital storytelling found an effective way to increase speaking skills in elementary students. Working with digital storytelling has helped me to discover how this technique is a powerful tool in acquiring a second language. In a classroom setting in my home country, it was encouraging to see English foreign language students interested in learning the language through stories. Even though they started the process of learning English in Kindergarten, it was frustrating to see them finish school, and after five years still struggle because they did not increase their speaking, and they could not express their ideas in the second language.

As a result of my experience as an English as a foreign language (EFL) learner, I have found that effective strategies, like using storytelling, make students feel comfortable and increase their speaking. By providing strategies, techniques and resources about storytelling, teachers can find digital storytelling tools and strategies that they can implement by themselves to improve speaking skills in the EFL elementary classroom setting and track learning growth and progress. This project includes the steps to use digital storytelling, some examples of stories, the tools to create the stories, and the techniques to support students.

Both in my own experience as a speaker of another language, and my vision as an ambassador of culture, I have been able to apply some storytelling strategies and techniques in order to succeed in my academic journey. The implementation of these strategies has been helpful and has allowed me to succeed. When you engage your English-language learners through the power, fun, and sharing of narrative, the formal elements of language acquisition will follow more easily. Storytelling can help EFL elementary students to succeed in their learning process, considering elementary as the basis of their process. I believe that as educators we must empower learners with tools that make them more independent in their learning. My mission as a language teacher is that every student can have a voice. Digital storytelling allows everyone to have a voice, especially for some who are more reluctant to speak in the classroom (Robertson et al., 2012). To do so, some strategies based on storytelling are provided, so teachers would be able to apply the strategies during the process.

Ellis and Brewster (1991) stated that many EFL teachers are interested in storytelling as a resource in teaching. A successful storyteller chooses adequate stories, is a good performance for the delivery is crucial and is prepared. Storytelling is the original form of teaching; it has the potential of fostering emotional intelligence and helps the child gain insight into human

behavior. Storytelling also promotes language learning by enriching learners' vocabulary and acquiring new language structures. Moreover, storytelling can provide a motivating and low anxiety context for language learning. The storytelling tips given in this research are meant to help the teacher as storyteller as prepare for a storytelling performance for students.

Using English in conversation is essential, especially in learning speaking. Becoming a capable speaker of English for the EFL learner is significant (Richards et al., 2002). Teachers consider speaking as having an important role in conveying or expressing thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Speaking is also an instrument to express messages to the listener whether the listener understands or not (Tarigan, 1986).This means that through speaking, people can try to express what they think or feel directly. There are many reasons why students should learn speaking in class; the first is so that students can interact with other people, fluently and appropriately. Then, secondly, speaking is an oral expression of thoughts. Using storytelling means that students can try to express what they think or feel directly through speaking.

Telling stories is an excellent way to combine instruction and entertainment. Stories are a useful tool for teaching languages (Fitria, 2000). Children usually love stories. While listening to stories, children develop a sense of structure that will help them understand the more complex literature stories. Through storytelling, the teacher can create an atmosphere where the students can learn English while being entertained.

A suggestion when using digital storytelling is that teachers must be creative in selecting techniques and media that their students will find interesting for the teaching-learning process. Therefore, the teacher should be creative in making or searching for stories that they will love and use them in teaching. The students will always be interested and enthusiastic when learning English. Students should not be shy to practice speaking English and not worry about making

mistakes; they should be active and creative in enriching their speaking through digital storytelling.

As a result, this thesis project's main aim is to share with EFL educators the multiple benefits of implementing the digital storytelling in the EFL classroom. This professional development workshop is designed to demonstrate how teachers can enrich their instruction, improve the delivery of the content they teach, and enhance students' learning through the implementation of the digital storytelling. The first workshop highlights the evolution of technology and highlights the main features of the storytelling in the classroom. In the second workshop, teachers learn how to produce their own digital storytelling and tutorials through google slides and clips applications.

Besides showing the benefits of digital storytelling and its integration in EFL learning, this project also intends to encourage teachers to understand the importance of integrating technology in the EFL classroom. It is essential for teachers to recognize that technology is a powerful tool that can improve teaching practices as well as affect positively the development of their learner's language skills. As a result, the workshop has been designed using research as a basis to support storytelling in EFL and establish validity and rationale for the increase of speaking skills in elementary students.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

As a skill that is both active and productive, speaking has consistently peaked researchers' interests, especially the foreign language teaching and learning domain. Speaking is often recognized as a crucial to function in an English context. Therefore, it is considered to be critical and central in learning or teaching a foreign language. Although in comparison to other language skills, speaking produces many challenges for English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Speaking is somewhat more difficult for them to master and to make their language production clear and understood in an EFL environment.

In EFL environments, speaking is rather arduous. It requires a series of processes, from the intention to speak to the articulation of clear speech (Levelt, 1989). According to Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) speaking is one of the most challenging skills to acquire because it requires both skills in listening comprehension and speech production subskills, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammatical pattern choice.

According to Nunan (2003) and Bailey (2005) the difficulty of speaking is incorporated in two phenomena: when it takes place in real-time, as it is unpredictable and unplanned situations, and second when speaking, it has opportunities to plan, edit, and revise the output. Looking through language teaching and learning literature, the theoretical rationale for speaking skills becomes relatively abundant and multidimensional. Levelt (1989) theorized speaking as a complex linguistic, cognitive skill in the learning process.

In accordance with Nunan (2003) speaking is a productive oral skill. It means to produce systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning. Speaking is the interactive process of constructing meaning by producing, receiving, and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). Speaking is a combination of linguistic and sociocultural competence. It is how to produce specific language points concerning grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, but also understanding when, why the language is produced. (McCarty, 1995; Cohen, 1996; Celce-Murcia and Elshtain, 2000).

Bygate (1987) has stated speaking with two elements: production and interaction skills. Oral language allows limited time to modify oral production, which refers to productive skills, while interaction skills concern decisions about communication and use of knowledge and motor-perception skills to achieve conversation. It depends on two kinds of skills: storytelling and descriptions. Chaney (1998) said that speaking is the process of building and sharing the meaning of words. It happens with verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts. It is often open-ended, spontaneous, and usually volatile. Levelt (1989) interpreted speech production as a mix of three phases: conceptualization of the message, making of the language representation, and delivery of the message.

Brown and Yule (1983) stated a discussion on the nature of speaking by distinguishing spoken and written language. Subsequently, Brown and Yule (1983) have discriminated between two essential spoken language functions: the transactional function, which is the transfer of information, and the interactional function, which is the notion of the purpose of speech that is to maintain a social relationship. Brown and Yule (1983) also explained that speaking is made up of short, fragmentary utterances in a range of pronunciations. Bailey (2005), remarks speaking is both the product and the process; it means the strategy we use to get the product has relevance in

the second language acquisition process. The speaking ability is acutely a skill to communicate a speech articulation or express a message appropriately. Harmer (2002) suggested that learners should know the language features to have a fluently and accurately speaking skill. These elements are of utmost importance for effective speaking. They include connected speech, expressive devices, lexis, grammar, and negotiation language.

When communicating orally in English, learners usually experience a modified interaction; the interaction is altered to make it easier to understand the message (Gas & Selinker, 2008). Such modifications occur through repetition of the spoken message and three conversational moves: clarification requests, confirmation, and clarification checks.

Based on the descriptions and viewpoints on speaking skills provided by various linguists, speaking can be summarized as a product, and a complicated process where expressing ideas, thoughts, and communicating needs, emotions, and feelings to others are included. Speaking occurs by using words or sounds of articulation in order to inform, interact, or negotiate.

Historical background of teaching speaking.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001) the purpose of learning a language in the grammar-translation method is based on reading and writing, and the ability to speak a foreign language is non-essential. Translation from one language to another has an important role here. The emphasis is on the accuracy, and the language of instruction is learners' native language

(Bailey, 2005; Brown, 2001; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001;). Accordingly, the target of instruction in the direct method is to learn a different language to

communicate and express a message. According to the studies, learners need to relate meaning directly and the target language, focusing on form and structure rather than significance (Brown, 2001; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In an EFL context of learning, the ability to convey meaning in communication has been recognized of vital importance, and the audiolingual method was questioned for not allowing students with the spontaneous and natural use of a foreign language. It is relevant to mention that these methods are not used or rarely used now. With the main goal to accomplish natural communication and express effectively, achieving communication competence became relevant in foreign language teaching. Richards (2006) stated the importance of the communication of ideas and the sharing the information in the target language, and the need to develop communicative competence, the Communicative Language Teaching was employed. CLT is the theory of a language as communication, and the main target is to engage learners in communication. It takes the learner and involves them in the process. The learner goes through the information process by sharing, negotiation of the meaning, and the interaction (Richards and Brown, 2001; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Rodgers, 2001). The CLT is elucidated by the philosophy of teaching a foreign language through a communicative approach with the primary focus on speaking and listening skills, on writing for specific communicative purposes, and on authentic reading (Brown, 2001). The other purpose of communicative language teaching, proffered by Krashen (1982) has involved learners in meaningful communication to create understandable input.

On the other hand, Swain (1985) proposed the comprehensible output hypothesis. It has stated that to learn to speak, learners have to speak. Swain (1985) claimed that through achieving successful negotiation of meaning by producing comprehensible output, learners recognize the

limits of their existing knowledge and have their attention on not-yet acquired knowledge or knowledge in the process.

Harmer (2001) noted the idea that learning will take care of itself. Harmer (2001) made the critical point related to CLT; he stated that learners need to be exposed in context to the target language and given opportunities to use the language to develop their knowledge and skills. Thus, the CLT approach's main characteristics are around the individual learner, taking his needs and objectives as starting points in teaching and learning. It means to focus on the process of acquiring a second or a foreign language on the students' needs.

According to the theories, communication in real-life situations requires more than just knowing the grammatical and semantic. Shumin (2002) noted the critical issue that effective oral communication requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interactions. According to Bachman (2006) the communicative language ability, has two essential features: knowledge and competence in the language, and the capacity to use the language. Bachman (2006) said the ultimate purpose is to measure the quality of the message content, as well as the quality of its transmission and reception. He notes that communicative language ability includes language competence, strategic competence, and psychological mechanism.

Brown (2001) stated that CLT's classroom goals should be focused on all the communicative competence components and should not be restricted to grammatical. Learners should be engaged in the practice and functional use of language for meaningful purposes. Accordingly, CLT provides learners with opportunities to use the language productively and receptively in an unrehearsed context. All four-competence components have an imperative influence on learners' speaking proficiency. The combination and employment of communicative competence components help prepare learners for the target language's practical and appropriate

use.

Bachman (1991) identifies four features that can be specified to communicative tests. These include “information gap, task dependency, integration of task and content within a given discourse domain, and the measurement of a much broader range of language abilities" (p. 678). The first feature requires participants to incorporate 'multiple sources of input'. The input of a writing task can, for instance, be based on both printed texts, and listening tasks. The second feature 'task dependency' means that doing tasks in one section depends on the content of previous sections. The third aspect concerns the incorporation of content and tasks within a given discourse domain. Four, these tests "attempt to measure a much broader range of language abilities including knowledge of cohesion, functions, and sociolinguistic appropriateness-than did earlier tests, which tended to focus on the formal aspects of language.

Current issues in teaching speaking.

Teaching speaking skills is not an easy job. It is a challenging job not only for teachers but also for learners. When teaching speaking production, scores of empirical studies focus on the important elements of speaking, such as fluency, pronunciation, correct use of vocabulary, and grammar since these elements are recognized as important variables in the performance and improvement of speaking ability.

Like many types of research states, teaching only the target language's linguistic background is not enough and cannot successfully engage EFL learners in real context communication in the target culture. Learners need to acquire the capacity to use the language in different sociocultural contexts (Bachman, 1991; Hymes, 1972). Following this, the current

focus on teaching speaking is on developing learners' communicative competence. Celce-Murcia (2001), has clarified that learners need extensive authentic practice in the classroom, such as discussions, interacting with peers and professors, and producing questions and answers. Besides, language learners should be encouraged to become flexible users of their knowledge, having communicative goals in mind (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000).

Viewpoints on teaching speaking with technology

The empirical evidence made in the research world of technology and language teaching and learning points that they all claim that technology is highly encouraged in foreign Language teaching classrooms. Beatty (2009) has stated that Computer-Assisted language learning (CALL) believes that integrating technologies into foreign language teaching and learning can provide EFL learners with more authentic input and more opportunities to practice the target language. In EFL classrooms, the CALL creates a great environment, which provides situations that motivate interest. This allows learners to have created dialogue, and communication enhances the activity and oral production. A positive environment feeds a sense of personal growth, facilitates collaborative work among the learners, provides rich learning experiences for all learners, and improves communication skills (Pennington, 2004; Cameron, 1999).

Summarizing the estimations of various researchers, it becomes apparent that integrating technologies in education has arisen useful, new, and powerful ways in the philosophy of language learning and teaching. It provides both teachers and learners with new and fascinating activities to complement the traditional ones. Using these tools provides learners with opportunities to involve technologies in their learning process. It highly motivates and inspires

them. As a result, learners become engaged and interested in their learning process and second language acquisition.

Using technology resources in teaching supports a cognitive approach to language learning, and provide learners supreme opportunity to interact within meaning-rich contexts. Learners build and achieve competence in a foreign language (Warschauer and Maskill, 2000). Language learners have a chance to be engaged in self-directed actions, which gives them opportunities for interacting (Egan, 1999).

Kasapoğlu-Akyol (2010) affirmed that using technology in language classrooms makes lessons more effective and engaging. Technology in the classroom provides the integration of sound, voice interaction, text, video, and animation and makes it possible to create an interactive learning environment that enhances the classroom (Ehsani & Knodt, 1998). Besides, teaching speaking with the incorporation of technology is considered to engage EFL learners in authentic social interactions and improve the exposure to the target language both inside and outside an EFL classroom (Nunan, 2003).

The technological tools originated to develop and enhance speaking skills are innumerable and diverse, varying between avatars, animations, podcasts, and digital tools. Digital storytelling provides the most common features among the best and powerful learning tools. Storytelling contributes to the enrichment and improvement of language learning and teaching. Digital storytelling is the tool that provides learners with opportunities to speak out even when they are marginalized by language (Bernajean, 2006). Digital storytelling enables learners to think critically and theorize creativity, apply their multiliteracy, reflect on their creative process (Benmayor, 2008; Bull & Kajder, 2004).

The history background of digital storytelling.

Digital storytelling appeared in the 1990s as a widespread and powerful storytelling tool. Initially, storytelling was used for business purposes as a unique way to communicate with consumers. It later captured educators' hearts and imaginations and became an influential educational tool. Digital storytelling has been, and continues to be, widely used in language teaching and learning processes because of its various factors such as the ease and speed with which learners can create their digital stories (Behmer, 2005; Robin, 2008)

Theoretical rationale of digital storytelling.

Researching and summarizing the definitions of digital storytelling provided by various authors explains the process as creating a short film that mixes a script with different multimedia elements, such as images, videos, music, and narration, and an author's voice (Bull & Kadjer, 2004; Porter, 2004; Robin, 2008; Sadik, 2008; Signes, 2008).

Universal learning design (UDL, 2009) is an educational framework that encourages teachers to allow learners with opportunities for learning new content and learning outcomes, views digital storytelling as an authentic pedagogical approach for diverse and make differentiation in learning and teaching.

The Digital Storytelling Association describes digital storytelling as the modern and new presentation of the traditional storytelling, a digital media applied to create stories to tell, share, and preserve. Digital storytelling is defined as one tremendous potential technology tool. Digital storytelling is a creative way learners tell stories in a new, imaginative, and potential way. It makes for easy production and the possibility of uploading; digital storytelling is considered a user-friendly tool that can serve for exchanging learners' ideas and viewpoints on the same topic

regarding , distance, time, or accessibility (Dogan & Robin, 2009; Lowenthal, 2009; Signes, 2008).

Axelson (1997) has defined digital storytelling as the latest treasure in media and interactive online content. Digital storytelling brings flexible and dynamic nature, which encapsulates audio, visual, and sensory elements. The process of creating a digital story consists of the following: write a few-minute story, gather pictures, record voices, and finally align images with the writing (Davidson & Porter, 2005; Meadows, 2003). The process of digital storytelling starts with the traditional writing process, so there is brainstorming to select a topic, then drafting. After it, students build the storyboard to visualize the story based on the script. The next step is the production stage using the website that the instructor decides (Bull & Kajder, 2004; Hughes & Robertson, 2010; Miller, 2009).

The length of educational digital stories is usually expected to range from two to ten minutes. When choosing a topic, it can be about personal tales, the recounting of historical

events, exploring life in one's community, or life (Jakes, 2007; Lowenthal, 2009; Meadows, 2003;). However, educational digital stories can have personal and instructional dimensions. Digital stories can include learners' viewpoints apart from the instructional content, i.e., in creating their educational stories, learners are not expected to reproduce merely a summary report or a collection of previously written facts and include their dimensions.

In other words, it can be expected from digital storytelling to reflect learners' way of perceiving, interpreting, and transmitting the knowledge, they acquire during the process (Hughes & Robertson, 2010; Sadik, 2008). Porter (2004) defined digital storytelling as the art of transforming and designing information. Thus, digital stories provide learners with opportunities to express specific facts and make themselves heard. Lambert (2002), described seven essential

components of digital storytelling. These elements include the purpose of the story, the narrator's point of view, a question, a content or topic choice, the clarity of the voice, the pacing of the narrative, a meaningful soundtrack, high quality images, the details, and good grammar and language. Signes (2008) stated that there is, the last one is of utmost importance in EFL since among the target of making learners create a digital story is to provide students with the means to improve and increase their command of the language.

Digital storytelling as a computer assisted language learning influence tool.

Digital storytelling, as a computer-assisted language learning tool, has been exhaustively analyzed with the main objective to investigate the influence and power in education Benmayor (2008). However, the great majority of the current research explores the essence of digital

storytelling as a learning tool in general, with a comparatively slight focus on language teaching and learning in particular. Robin, 2008 has stated that digital storytelling is a tool to provide learners with enhanced opportunities to use, achieve, and develop skills which the 21st-century learners are expected and encouraged to have, such as information literacy, creativity, risk-taking, and last but not least, the utilization of technology for communicative purposes. Learners' active participation in digital storytelling and creative work provides them with a strong foundation to develop all the skills that many teachers label 21st Century Skills (Jakes, 2007; Porter, 2004; Robin, 2008).

Barrett (2006), Robin (2008), and Banazewski (2005) explained critical skills that are brought together during the process of creating a digital story. Among these skills, they point out writing, speaking, organization, technology, presentation, interpretation, and problem-solving skills, critical thinking, which develop digital, information literacy.

According to Hull and Katz (2006) digital storytelling not only motivates learners but also makes them very productive. It helps them to reveal themselves in a narrative way and provides huge opportunities for self-reflection and evaluation. Moreover, building confidence as writers, the integration of music, sound, and personal narration allows learners to have control of how they present themselves to the world. Besides, digital storytelling requires learners to work on the information, like synthesized, apply their creativity, manage research, and use critical thinking (; Dogan & Robin, 2009; Hull & Katz, 2003; Ohler, 2008).

In addition, digital storytelling is advocated to help language learners to develop and improve language and communicative skills. The benefits of using digital storytelling for the EFL teaching/learning process vary from increasing learners' motivation and creativity to helping them using personalization of the learning experience (Barret, 2006; Bull & Kajder, 2004; Robin, 2008). Roby (2010) has researched that when teachers actively include digital storytelling in their curriculum, they facilitate learners' learning and inspire them. They provide learners with a significant educational experience if carefully planned and prepared. Moreover, learners become highly motivated by the personal nature of digital storytelling.

Another research study states that EFL teachers report improved self-esteem after a learner completes a digital project due to the environment (Banaszewski, 2005; Dogan & Robin, 2008). Digital storytelling encourages learners to read and get a deep understanding. It enhances competence with technology as they refine their problem-solving skills (Behmer, 2005; Dogan & Robin, 2009; Kennedy, 2010; Signes, 2008).

As a deduction of digital storytelling's effectiveness and potentials for teaching and learning purposes, there are pros and cons. The eight pros include the following: digital storytelling provides new methodologies in the classroom, new capacity, more interest and

engagement in the learning speaking process, more motivation, creativity, it enhances the integration of technologies into the curriculum, images, and pictures facilitate understanding of complex contents, and it promotes communication. Two categories can be turning to disadvantages: the need for more teacher education and training and the need for more time. As it is known, storytelling needs learner's time to create digital stories (Coutinho, 2009; Hughes & Robertson, 2010; Robin, 2008,)

Moreover, in light of existing research and their findings, it becomes discernible that many advantages, rather than disadvantages of implementing digital storytelling in teaching and learning can be recommended, such as providing more variation than traditional methods in current practice, personalizing learning experience, providing explanations and the practice of topics more compelling, creating real-life situations quickly, and improving or increasing the involvement of students in the process of learning (Barret, 2006; Sadik, 2008; Signes, 2008;).

The potential pedagogical benefits of digital storytelling for speaking.

To provide a clearer picture of digital storytelling as a pedagogically powerful tool aiming to develop speaking skills, first its core, i.e., storytelling should be examined. With some noticeable evidence in language teaching literature, storytelling captures immediate attention as an ancient technique that has always had its unique place in language arts classrooms. Storytelling is most frequently designated as the original form of teaching speaking: a relatively simple but powerful method used to improve speaking skills.

Storytelling requires language learners to combine various types of knowledge, together with their performance skills and communicative strategies (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). Moreover, it is used not only for communication purposes but also for teaching literacy skills,

cooperative learning skills, critical thinking, and building knowledge of different contexts (Behmer, 2005; Robin, 2008). More fundamentally, storytelling is a unique human experience that enables learners to express themselves through language. A number of articles articulate that bringing storytelling and technology together can result in a variety of benefits, such as learners' better cognitive growth and motivation produced through this combination. It also reports various learning by enhancing problem-solving skills and improving speaking and listening (Hofer & Swan, 2005).

Due to the nature of the activity, digital storytelling provides means for practice in spoken language and allows language learners to play with words and become more confident in speaking in the target language. While creating a digital story, learners are expected to write a script to read it aloud, which provides them with an excellent chance to review spoken and written discourse features (Signes, 2008; Kennedy, 2010). They can be recorded or can record themselves as often as they wish and watch themselves, which enables them to significantly improve their oral skills (Gong, 2002; Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000). Learners can check their pronunciation, spelling, and grammar, and those who are afraid of embarrassingly making errors in class are more willing to speak when using technologies to record themselves (Pennington, 2004). Therefore, digital storytelling has excellent potential to help learners learn a language due to the interplay between writing, speaking, and listening (Ohler, 2008; Hofer & Swan, 2005).

Digital storytelling seeks to prepare language learners to communicate in a real-world that demands the facility to represent the information in dynamic ways effectively. It is a powerful way to provide learners with a learning environment where they work collaboratively and think critically to apply communication skills. It allows them to cross the learner's boundary

to contributors, and their works become meaningful and authentic (Behmer 2005; Miller, 2009; Hofer & Swan, 2005).

Robin (2008) has mentioned a case study on speaking by implementing digital storytelling was conducted in an Indonesian EFL setting. Along with its results, digital storytelling can be safely reported to help EFL learners to learn and improve speaking. It is also documented that all learners participated actively and supportively in speaking activities. Their repetition in the pronunciation of words until obtaining the correct form to tell stories contributed positively to their pronunciation. Besides, the learners assessed their fluency by listening to their recorded voices in digital storytelling. The results also disclosed that digital storytelling had trained the learners to maintain effective communication and creativity.

Tsou et al. (2006) assert that digital storytelling is imbued with a high potential to improve and promote language proficiency in speaking along with other skills, such as writing, reading, and listening. Ramirez-Verdugo and Belmonte's (2007) experimental study investigated digital storytelling's effectiveness on the understanding of spoken English by Spanish elementary ESL learners. They claim that visual images in the digital story and learners' interaction with the application helped them focus on the language's oral production.

Recapitulating the findings and claims of current research studies in various EFL and ESL settings, digital storytelling can be a useful digital tool to enhance speaking skills. It puts in language learners' hands a potent and powerful tool to overcome obstacles they encounter in developing speaking skills in an EFL context.

The modern literature of language teaching and learning reviewed in this study shows a strong and justified tendency to view speaking as one of the language skills of utmost importance to master. In this study, digital storytelling is dedicated to enhance and improve learners'

speaking proficiency. However, the field of digital storytelling in language teaching and learning, especially in speaking, has not yet been investigated thoroughly.

Chapter 3: Project Design

In this chapter, I explain the rationale behind creating a workshop of strategies and activities for English as a Foreign Language Teachers to develop speaking strategies in the context of learning English as a foreign language. The workshop intends to be an additional resource for teachers to use when planning the participatory approach of digital storytelling in their lessons.

Language is a tool for communication. We communicate with others, to express our ideas, and to know others' ideas as well. Communication takes place, where there is speech. Without speech we cannot communicate with one another. The importance of speaking skills, hence is enormous for the learners of any language. Without speech, a language is reduced to a mere script. The use of language is an activity, which takes place within the confines of our community. Dialogue in language, according to Bakhtin, (1981) means the process which meaning is evolved out of interactions among the author, the work and the reader or listener. Also these elements are affected by the contexts in which they are placed, namely by social and political forces. We use language in a variety of situations. People at their work places are supposed to speak correctly and effectively in-order to communicate well with one another. Any gap in commutation results in misunderstandings and problems.

Speaking is the uniquely human act or process of sharing and exchanging information, ideas, and emotions using oral language (Fisher & Frey, 2007). The goal of speaking is to

achieve an interactive communication between the speaker and the listener. Teaching speaking is the activity where the teacher leads their students to improve their ability in expressing emotions, ideas or feelings orally. Based on the concept of teaching speaking, students are deemed proficient in speaking if they can express their feeling, idea or emotion effectively.

Teachers have a responsibility to help students in improving their speaking skills by making some corrections regarding to the problem in the teaching learning progress. One method used in order to improve communicative skills in a real context of the language is storytelling. Harmer (1998) proposed that teaching speaking must focus on the real language use. For that reason, speaking as a productive skill on second language theories is considered as fundamental as the other skills when learning a language. According to Peck (1989) by using the storytelling, method learners are exposed to new vocabulary, real context, expressions and pronunciation to be used in oral production. Besides, a storytelling method empowers and motivates learners to improve their speaking skill.

Dillon (2014) stated that digital stories, easy to produce and simple to publish are an ideal way to energize learning and engage students at a deeper level. Digital storytelling creates space for students to pursue topics about which they are passionate, grows their learning around assigned topics, and displays their learning for peers, teachers, and audiences beyond the schoolhouse, all of whom are able to interact with the storyteller. To allow the power of story to blossom in learning spaces, it is necessary to focus on a few factors that can maximize its effect. This workshop is designed to improve students' speaking proficiency by using digital story telling strategy. The storytelling guides teachers to tell personalized stories to the learners in their foreign language in this case. The storytelling strategy has been implemented by language teachers all over the world especially in the field of teaching English as a foreign

language. This powerful foreign language teaching method empowers teachers to improve students' speaking proficiency.

In order to face these speaking problems, the teacher should apply a technique that emphasizes prior knowledge as the main point in the teaching and learning process. Digital Storytelling is the interactive approach between students, teacher, and materials (Lie, 2008). Teachers have access to a workshop with a set of activities and strategies that can be used with any topic that they plan to bring to the classroom. Students are engaged in meaningful activities that seek to reproduce real-life situations. The packet is divided into four sections, (a) what is storytelling; (b) benefits of digital storytelling; (c) speaking strategies; (d) planning activities for speaking development. The technological tools and strategies included in the workshop are supported by the teaching methods and approaches that are relevant and effective for the improvement of speaking skill. The hands-on part of the packet contains four activities for increasing speaking skill with the following items: (a) objective; (b) materials; (c) instructions; (d) strategies. Through this packet of information, teachers are able to develop digital storytelling in their classroom using this information as a guide and outline for their classes in order to develop and improve speaking skills.

Chapter 4: The Project

This workshop focuses on Digital Storytelling (DST) to increase speaking: how to use (DTS) effectively in EFL classroom setting to make students feel confident about speaking a foreign language. The workshop is offered to the EFL teachers from public and private institutions in the metropolitan area in Costa Rica where English is taught.

The expectation of this workshop is to contribute to the ongoing discussions on improving speaking skills of foreign language students in public and private schools in Costa Rica. In addition, the workshop aims to raise awareness of using technology in elementary students with the traditional and powerful tool of Storytelling methods offered in other countries for English language learners and the effectiveness of those strategies and techniques to make students increase their speaking skill and communication for English language acquisition.

The delivery of the workshop content and activities is supported by a PowerPoint presentation (See Appendix A: Slides). The workshop includes four stages: The first stage focuses on the theoretical definition of DST in education and foreign language acquisition theory. The second stage objective focuses on the benefits of using DST in an EFL classroom setting. The third stage aims to give examples, strategies and tools to work with DTS in elementary schools in Costa Rica including and some suggestions for supporting and implementing this approach. Lastly, the fourth stage gives the teachers the opportunity to apply the resources and create a DST following the steps and recommendations.

This stage begins with a definition of storytelling (Figure 4.1. See also Appendix A, Slide #4), followed by the examples of storytelling.

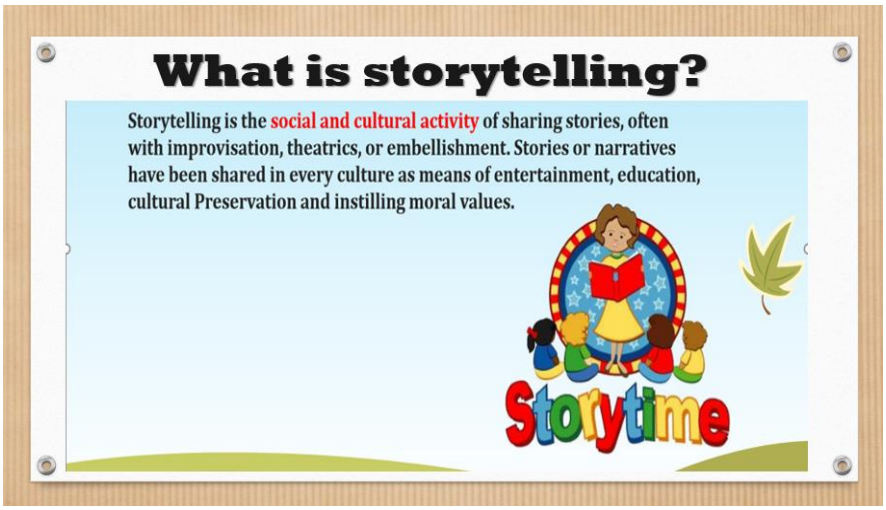


Figure 4.1: What is storytelling?

Next, the point is placed on the power of storytelling according to Science. Following the definition of storytelling, a video is presented, with the entrepreneur and storyteller Leo Widrich. (Figure 4.2. See also Appendix A, Slide #5). He noted that there's research to suggest that when we hear a story, not only are the language processing parts in our brain activated, but any other area in our brain that we would use when experiencing the events of the story are, too explaining the benefits. Visual examples are given to provide a better understanding of what does story telling do in our brains.

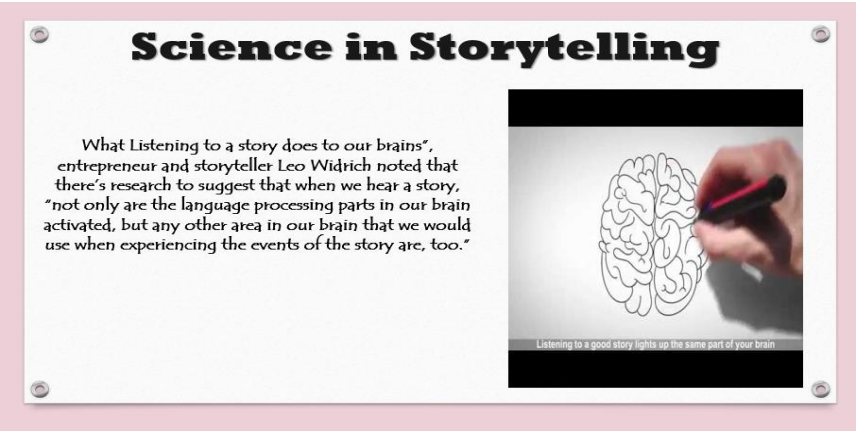


Figure 4.2: How does our brain work with storytelling?

After discussing the findings about storytelling in the Science, there is a visual infographic to have a better understanding of the effects on the brain when using storytelling. A (Figure 4.3. See also Appendix A, Slide #6).

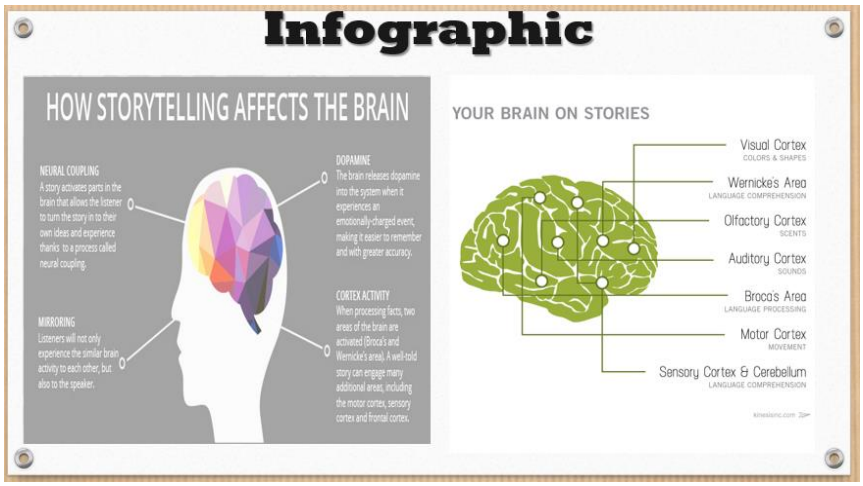


Figure 4.3: Storytelling affects the brain.

Next, the discussion focuses on the effects of the DST approach, why this approach works in education, and the role of this powerful tool in the educative field. (Figure 4.4. See also Appendix A, Slide #7).

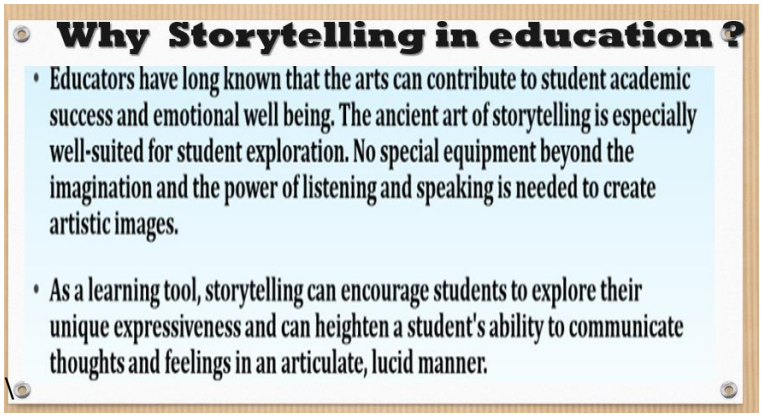


Figure 4.4: Storytelling in Education

The following definition focuses on the power of storytelling in elementary EFL classrooms. We know we need to help students prepare for the real world and improve in behavior issues. This explains how using digital storytelling makes a safe and comfortable environment for our EFLs and gives them the confidence to speak. (Figure 4.5. See also Appendix A, Slide #8).

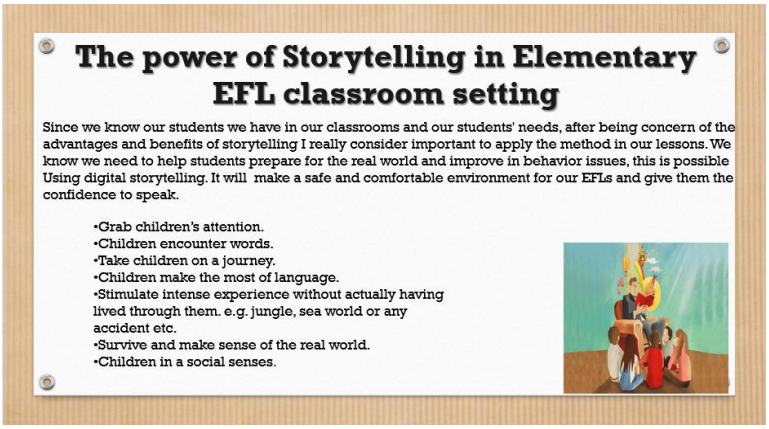


Figure 4.5: The power of DST in elementary EFL classroom setting.

The following discusses the advantages of storytelling in foreign language acquisition (Figure 4.6. See also Appendix A, Slide #9). Stated by González(2009), telling stories provides the opportunities for students to speak the foreign language creatively, integrate information and knowledge they learn from other sources, and become more confident in the ability to express themselves spontaneously, storytelling allows the child to become part and communicate.

Figure 4.6: Advantages of storytelling.

The next discussion provides the importance of storytelling using media and some relevant tips to increase speaking while applying the DTS approach in classroom.(Figure 4.7. See also Appendix A, Slide #10).

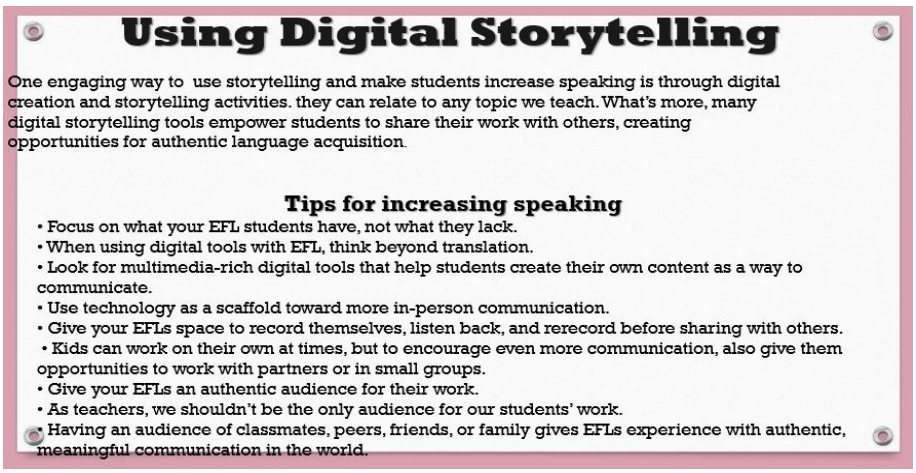


Figure 4.7: Using DST's tips.

Next, the discussion focuses on the suggested tools used when making digital storytelling, by explaining their suggested grade level, the usage and what each tool offers. (Figure 4.8. See also Appendix A, Slide #11).

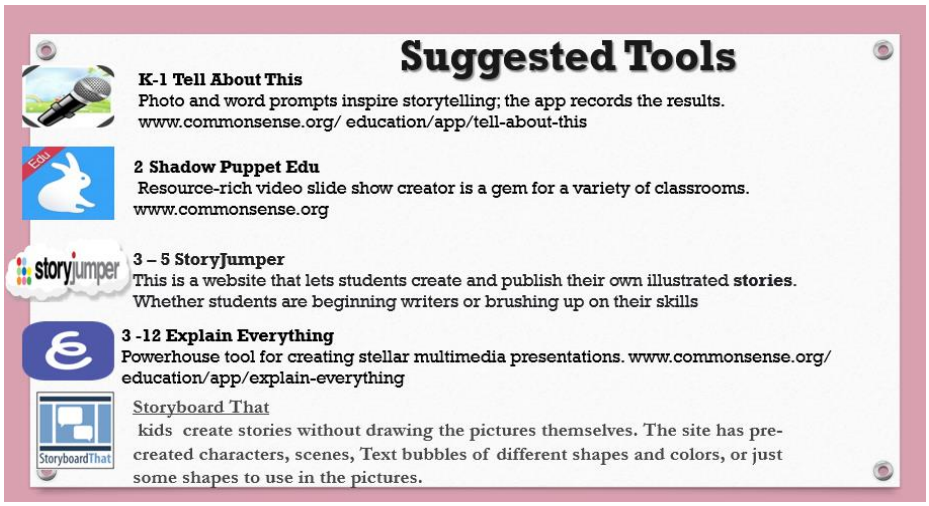


Figure 4.8: Tools to create Digital Storytelling in class.

The following explanation focuses on the strategies when using storytelling to increase speaking skills. It shows how when the teacher uses these strategies it help the EFLs to improve and communicate better while using digital storytelling. (Figure 4.9. See also Appendix A, Slide #12).

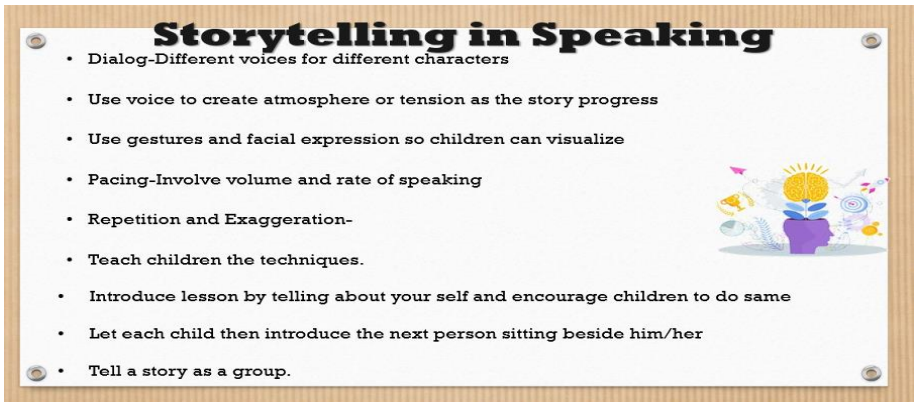


Figure 4.9: Storytelling in Speaking.

This following shows a guided activity for teachers about how to use digital storytelling in planning a lesson for elementary students in first grade.(Figure 4.10. See also Appendix A, slide #13).

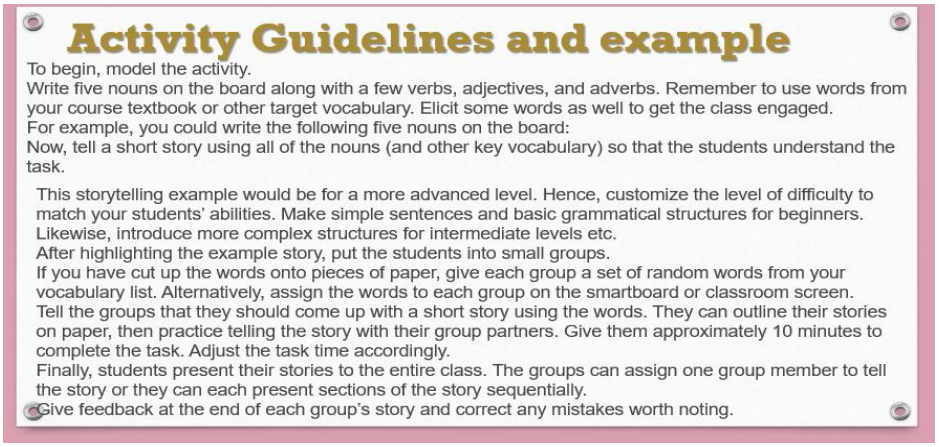


Figure 4.10: Guided activity for DST.

At this point the facilitator will interact with the participants. The objective of the stage is to provide a space to work in groups and discuss their ideas for planning . Participants will see the visual prompts to have a better understanding of the lesson plan and ideas about how to use DST to increase student speaking. (Figure 4.11. See also Appendix A, slide #14).

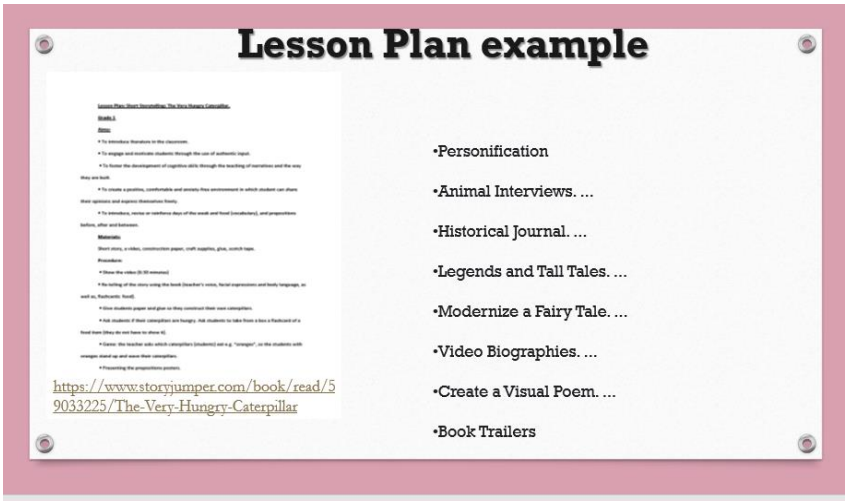


Figure 4.11: Discussion activity, making planning.

After the interactive activity, think and share, the objective of the next activity is to provide them the steps to make their own DST lesson. Here, have participants work in groups and make a lesson using the steps, the tips and strategies to increase speaking. (Figure 4.12. See also Appendix A, slide #15).

Figure 4.12: Create a DST's lesson

The aim of the next activity is to provide feedback and share experiences; therefore, participants will mix with others groups and with the help of the visual image about processes they will reflect about how can they scaffold when having different levels of speaking among their students. The second question will be about how can they modify those steps according to the grade level? (Figure 4.13. See also Appendix A, slide #16).

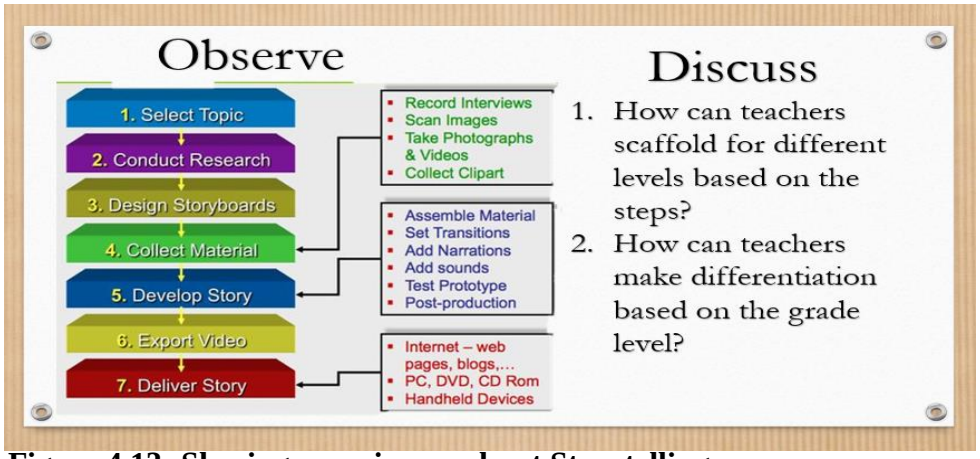


Figure 4.13: Sharing experiences about Storytelling.

The final slide will wrap up the workshop with a conclusion about the DST approach as a great source to interact, make students feel comfortable and get enough confidence to increase speaking. (Figure 4.14. See also Appendix A, slide #17).

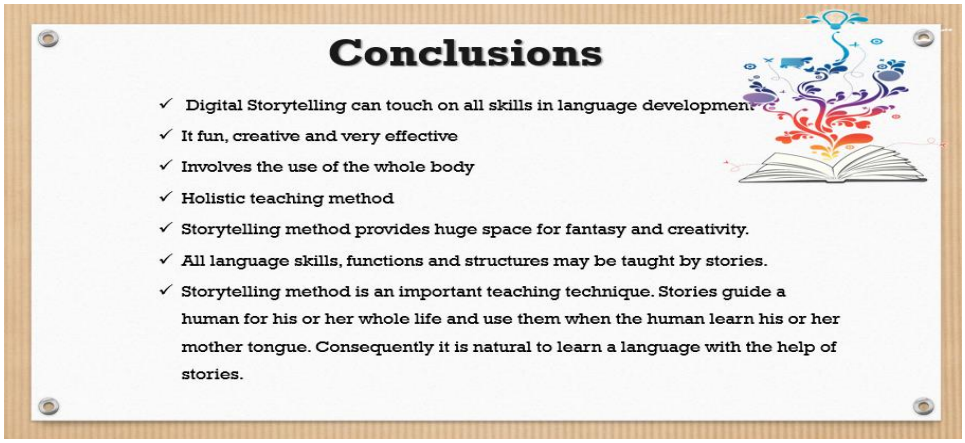


Figure 4.14: Conclusion about the benefits of DST.

In concluding the workshop, the goal is to give the participants time for a final reflection (Figure 4.15. See also Appendix A, Slide #18). The facilitator invites the participants of the workshop to participate and express themselves and grants them the time and conditions required by the construction process and maybe the chance to have some extra workshops for further information.

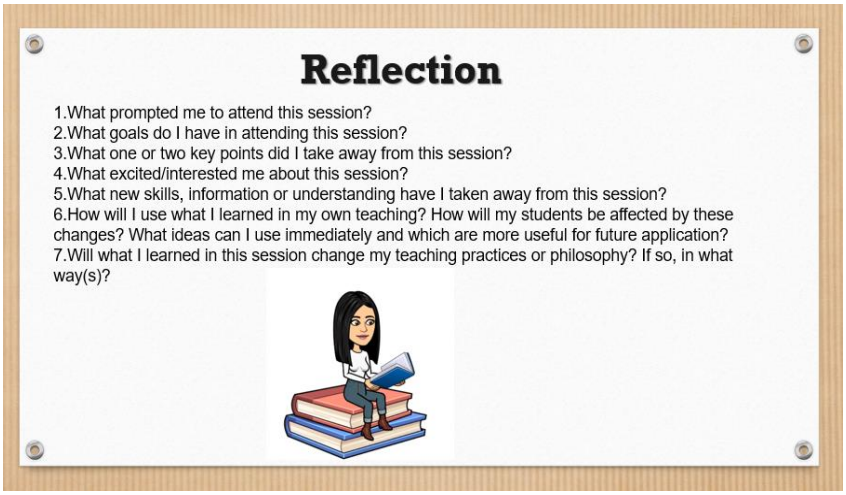


Figure 4.15: Final Reflection.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Digital storytelling is a sophisticated and somewhat new teaching strategy for the teacher to interact with students in learning speaking. Through digital storytelling, students are engaged in the activity of the classroom in a comfortable atmosphere. Furthermore, Students actively provide an opinion on the subject. In line with this, students can give opinions cognitively and effectively, without being afraid of whether this opinion is right or wrong.

Through digital storytelling, students actively explore a topic based on the perspective they have about the content of the text. In this case, the students learn to take a stand, especially when they have a different opinion. Applying this kind of method promotes students' speaking ability. They view speaking as an enjoyable thing to learn; it can be concluded that digital storytelling is an effective strategy to promote students' speaking fluency. Similarly to my own conclusion, Chuang and Kuo, (2013) suggested that digital storytelling is one instructional tool that can boost students' four skills, including speaking.

From the review above, we have seen that sophisticated tools in general and digital storytelling can be applied in the teaching and learning process to take students' interest and motivate both teachers and students. When teaching speaking in English, teachers can use this digital storytelling as a strategy to construct their students' usage of language interactively by giving a decent response to the students because it is the act of utilizing to tell stories. The students can also learn while listening to others or audio, giving an opinion by their point of

view, and retelling the story in front of the class. They can create creative digital storytelling based on their experiences, so they can appreciate the learning procedure and will not get bored

The provided audio and combinations of pictures will examine students' listening skills and allow them to grasp the story content handily. Besides, it will enrich their vocabularies and pronunciations. Because of listening practices with digital storytelling, they will produce speaking by presenting their perspective of the story or picture and retelling it in front of the class. In this stage, students' will also build their self-confidence and bravery. It is conceivable to take another advantage of digital storytelling in learning speaking by creating stories based on students' experiences or recounting events. To conduct the situation, students' may utilize authentic photos, daily paper features, audio voices, and other accessible materials to make a story that adds depth and meaning to the story. In the end, they present their own digital story to their friends

Based on my experience, most teachers do not have enough tools to increase speaking in the EFL classroom setting. For this reason, I created a workshop for EFL teachers that could be used as a reference guide when applying this approach. Teachers can also have a better understanding when using and creating Digital storytelling for EFLs. This background information can help to provide strategies to make the students feel more confident when speaking English. Likewise, throughout the school year, classroom teachers can refer to this guide for examples and advice when working with storytelling.

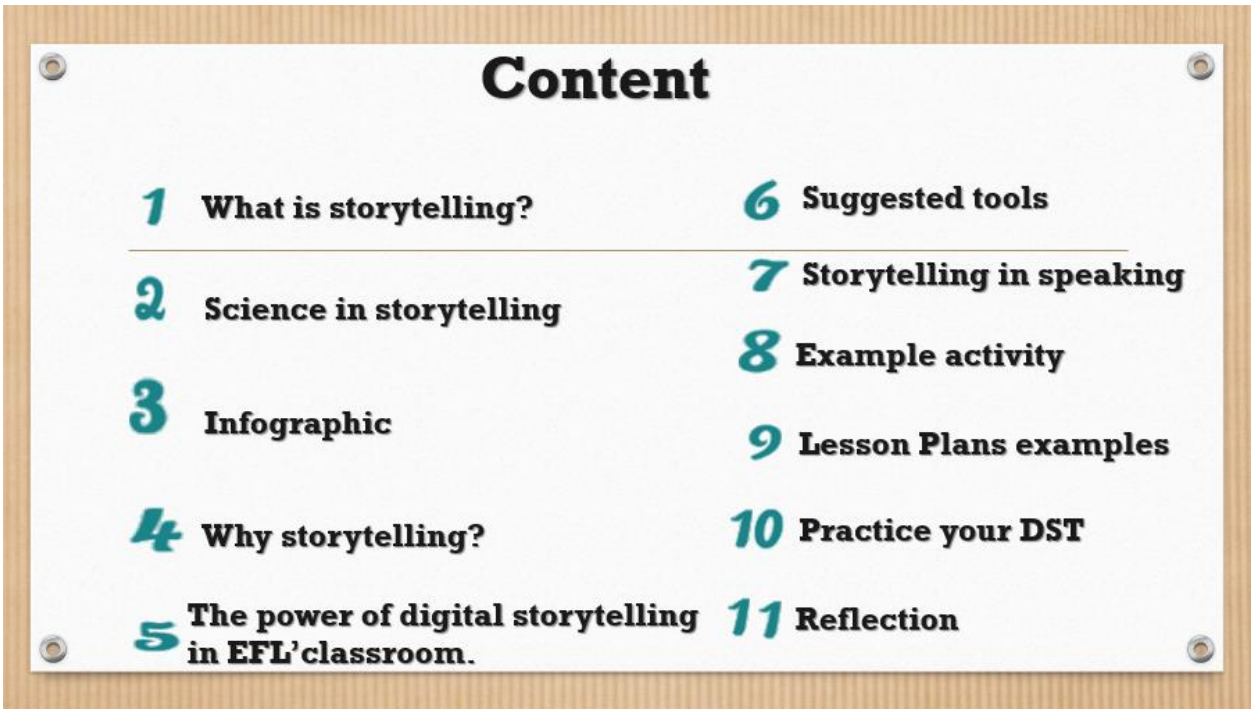
This manual will need to be updated following new apps and media, reinforcing this manual's storytelling to be a continued success. Teachers who have this training will be more likely to embrace and apply creative ways to increase speaking with their EFLs when working on any topic. Finally, when properly utilized, this will create a more robust and more comfortable

environment in the class, providing them with media and resources to feel the confidence to produce and improve speaking.

Appendix

Slide #1

Slide #2



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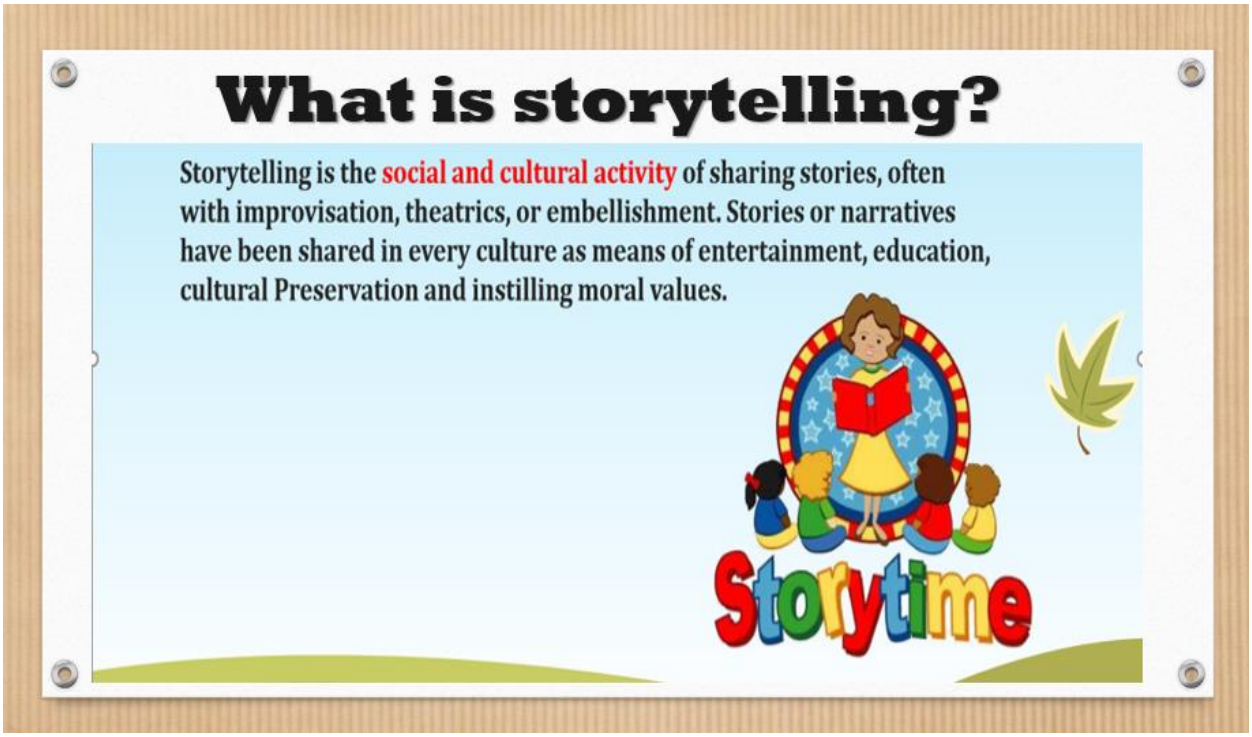

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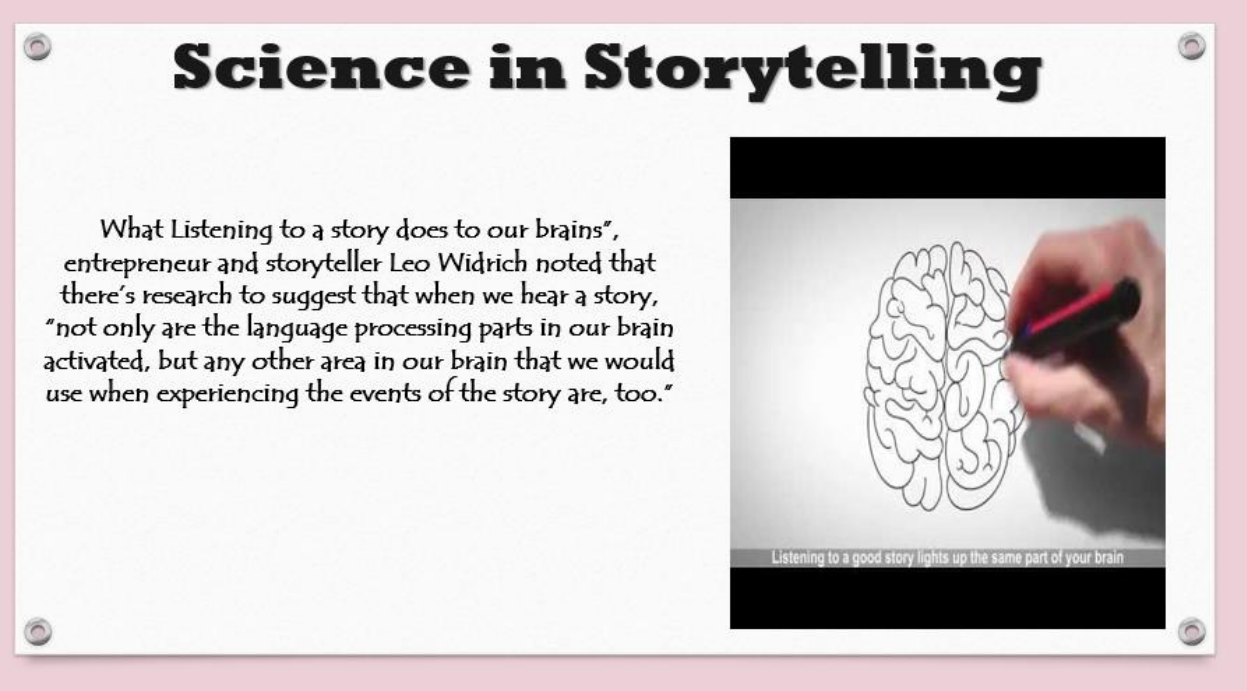

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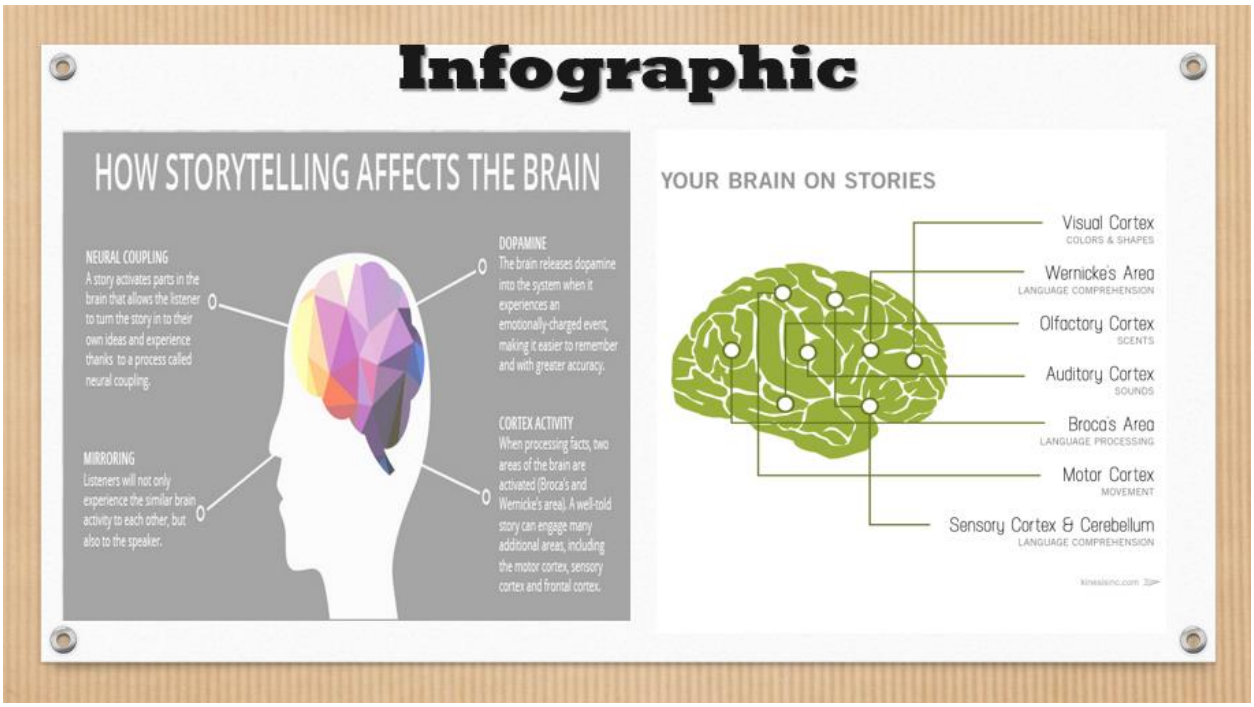


Slide # 6

Why Storytelling in education ?

- Educators have long known that the arts can contribute to student academic success and emotional well being. The ancient art of storytelling is especially well-suited for student exploration. No special equipment beyond the imagination and the power of listening and speaking is needed to create artistic images.

- As a learning tool, storytelling can encourage students to explore their unique expressiveness and can heighten a student's ability to communicate thoughts and feelings in an articulate, lucid manner.

Slide #7

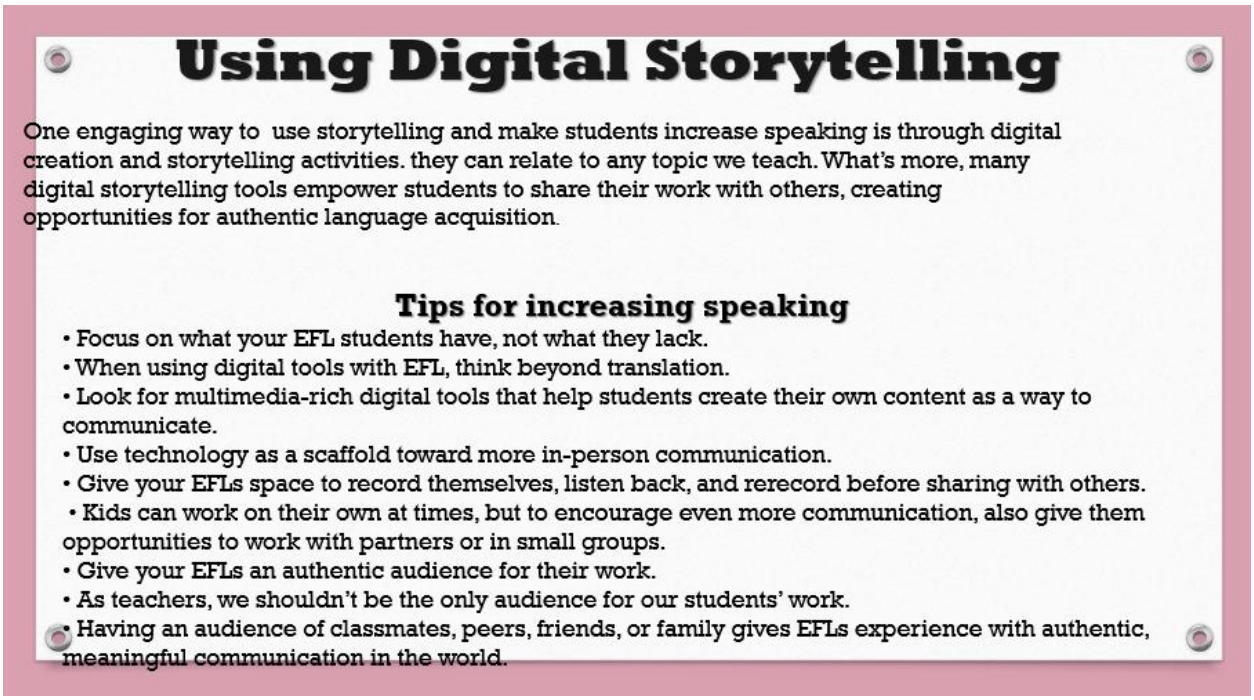
The power of Storytelling in Elementary EFL classroom setting

Since we know our students we have in our classrooms and our students' needs, after being concern of the advantages and benefits of storytelling I really consider important to apply the method in our lessons. We know we need to help students prepare for the real world and improve in behavior issues, this is possible Using digital storytelling. It will make a safe and comfortable environment for our EFLs and give them the confidence to speak.

- Grab children's attention.
- Children encounter words.
- Take children on a journey.
- Children make the most of language.
- Stimulate intense experience without actually having lived through them. e.g. jungle, sea world or any accident etc.
- Survive and make sense of the real world.
- Children in a social senses.

Slide # 8

Slide # 9



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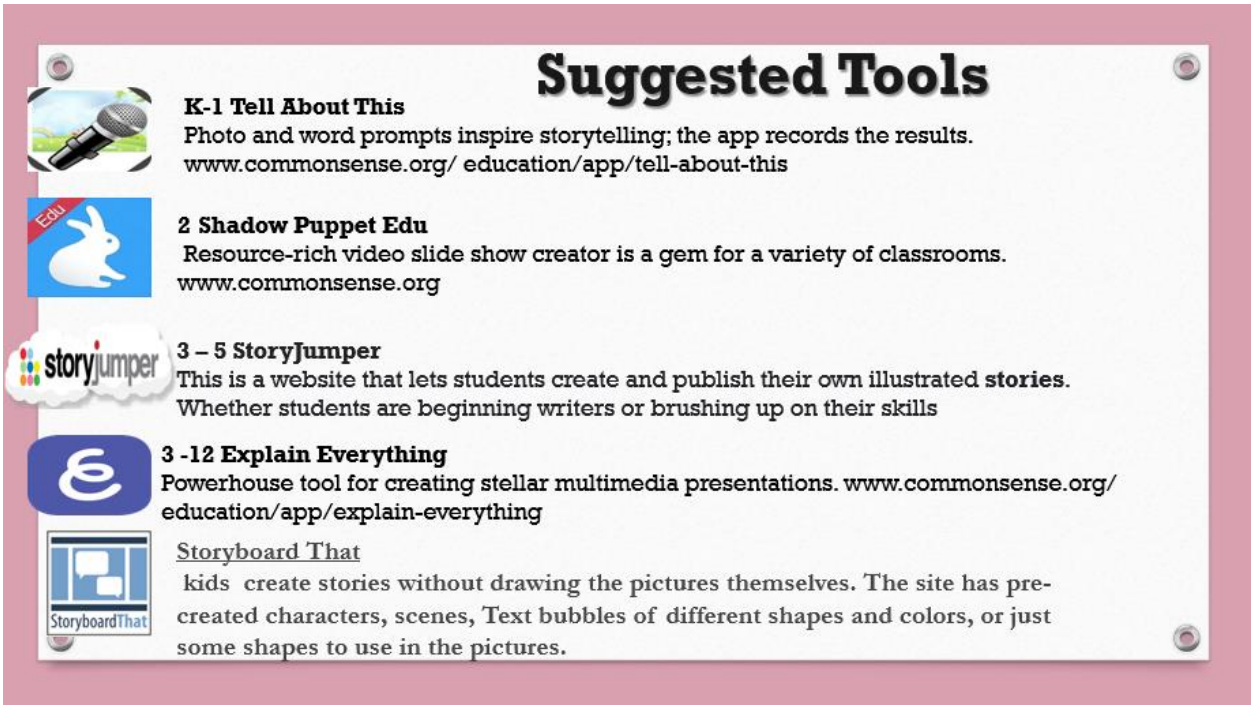

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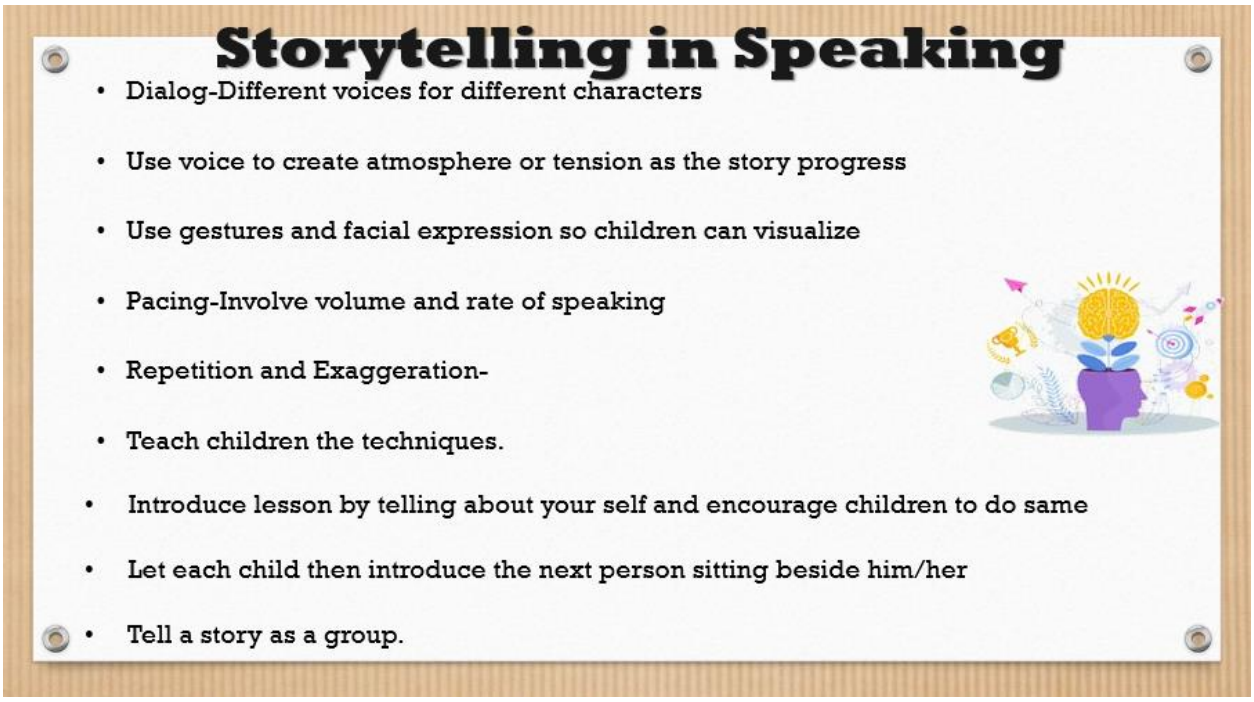

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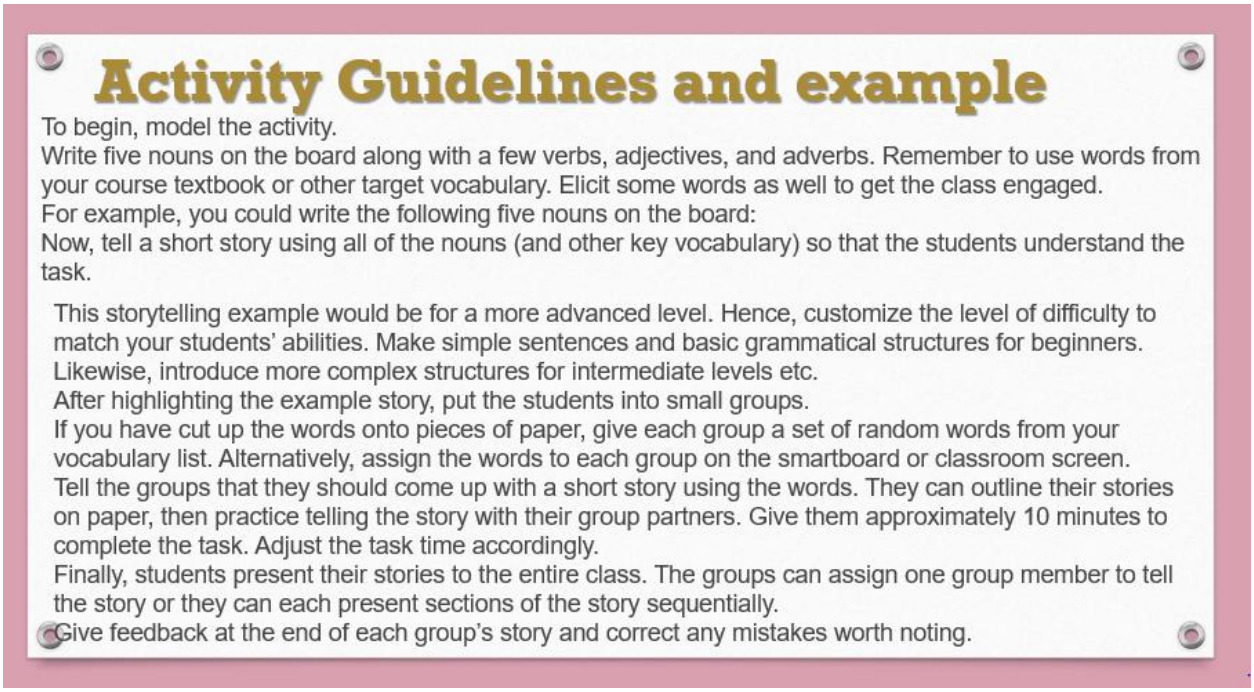

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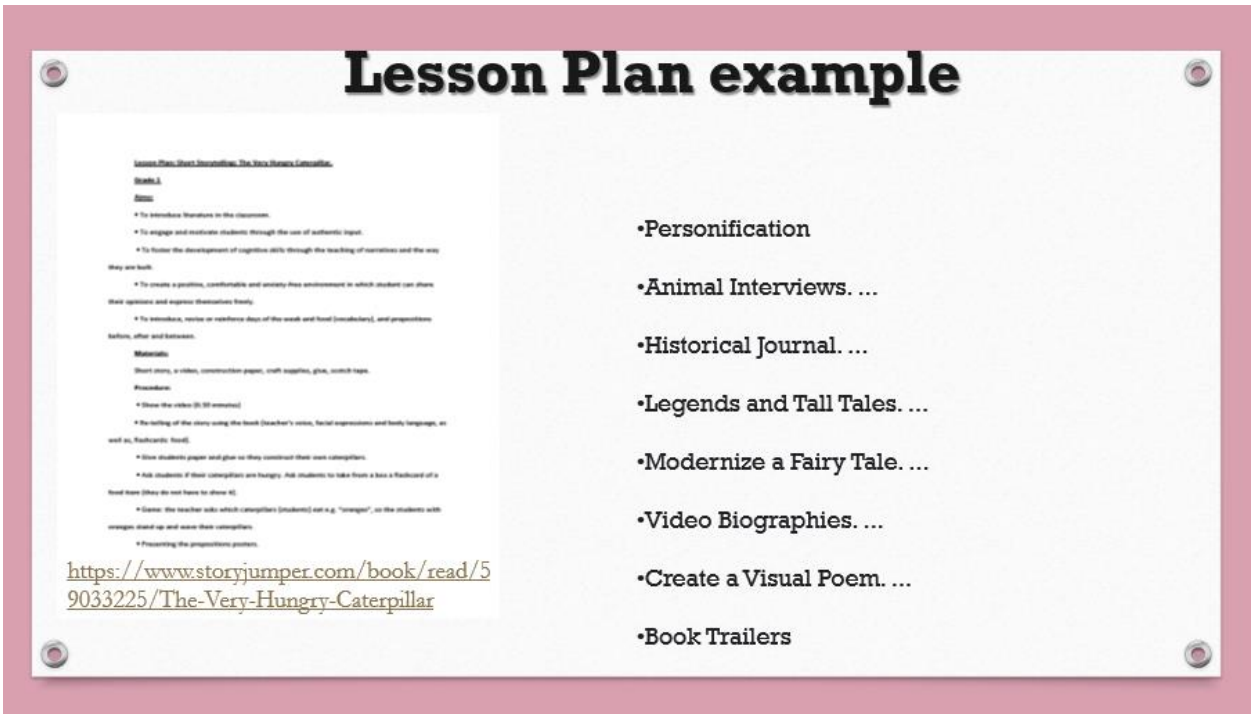

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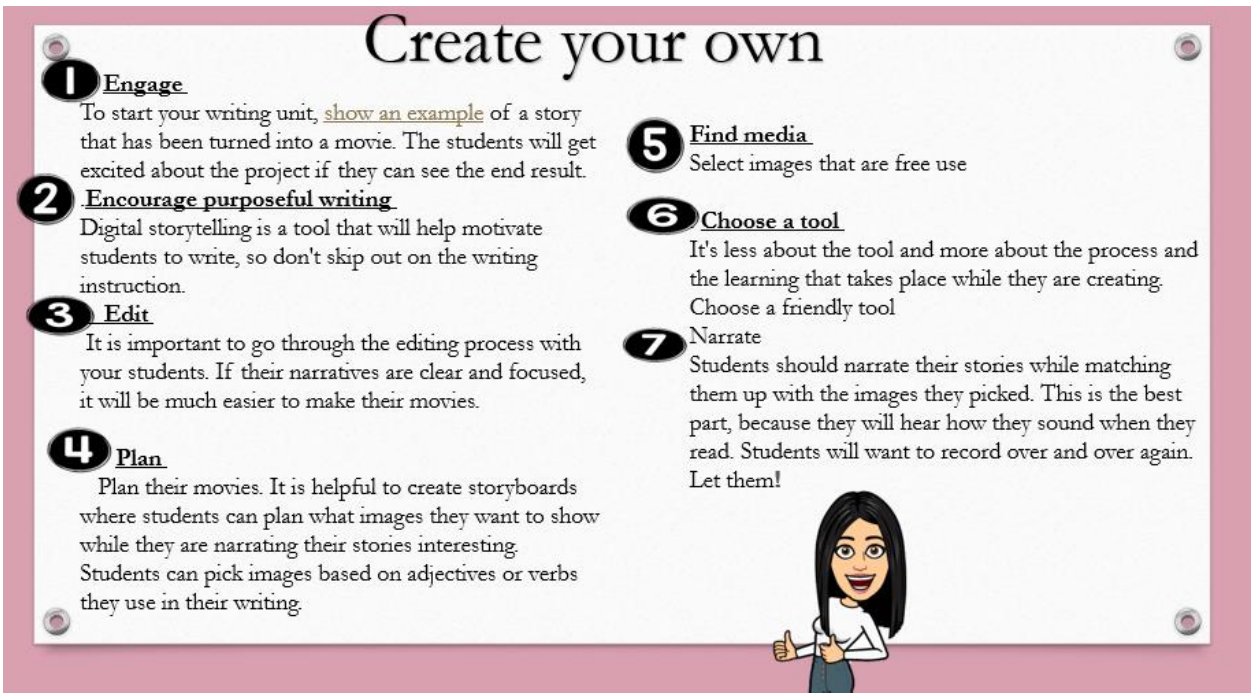

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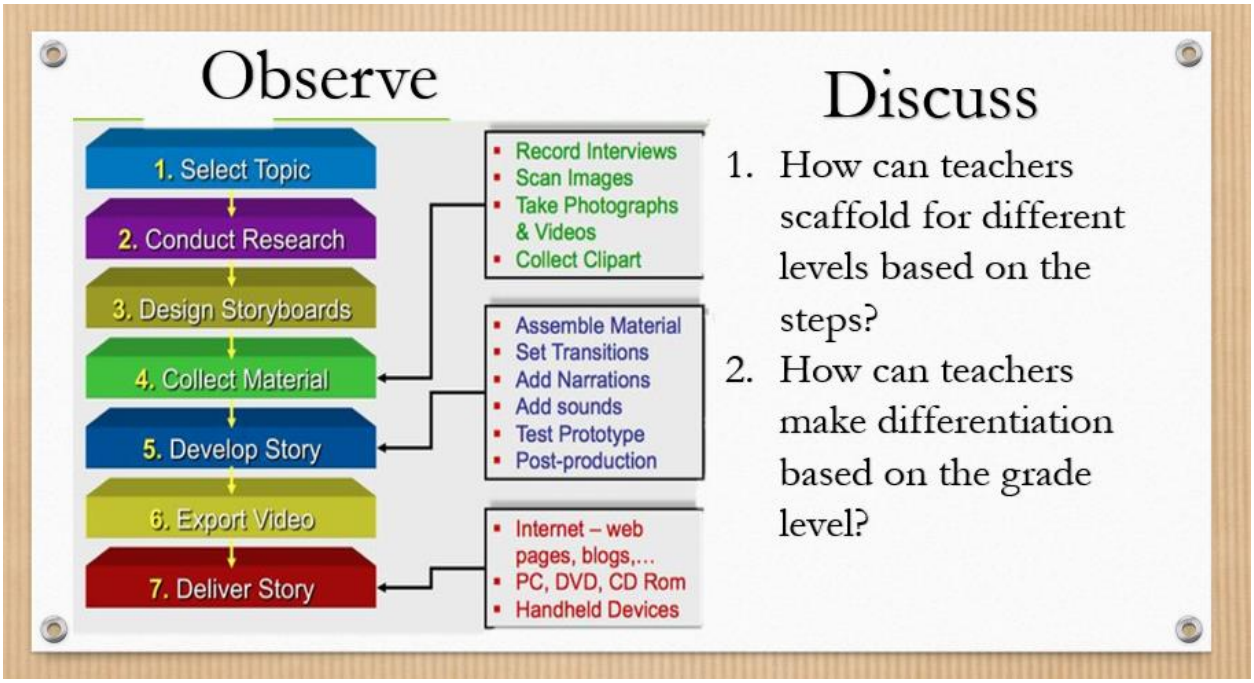

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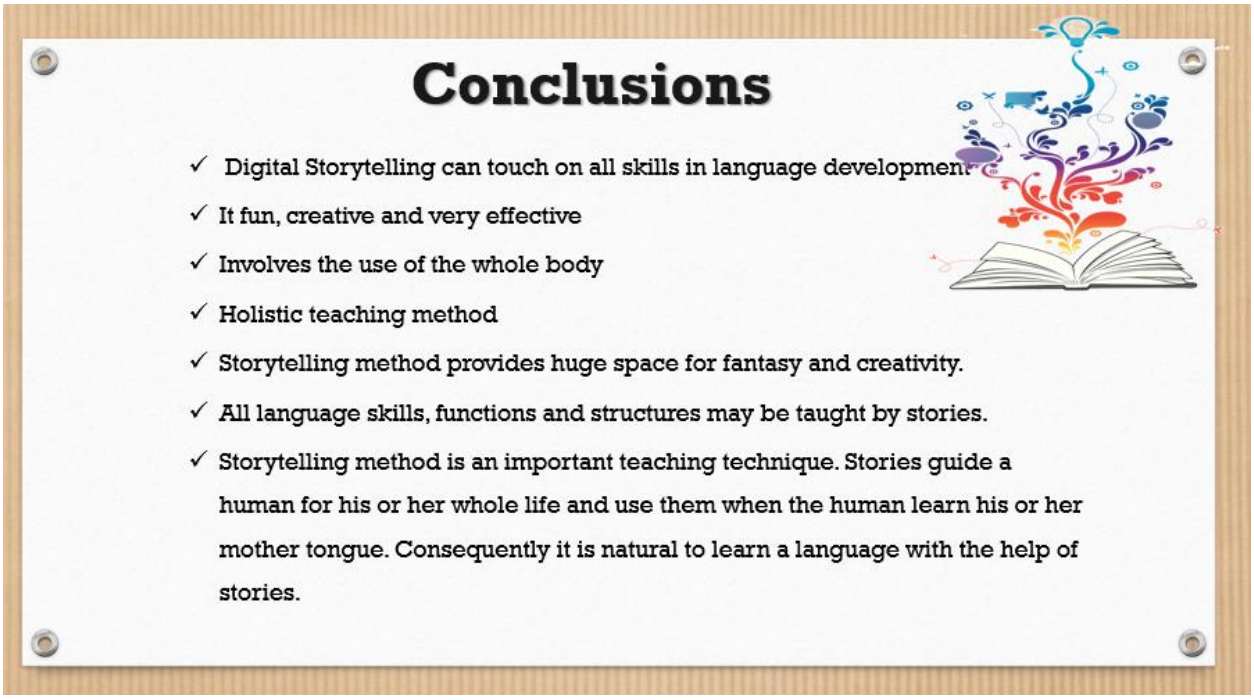

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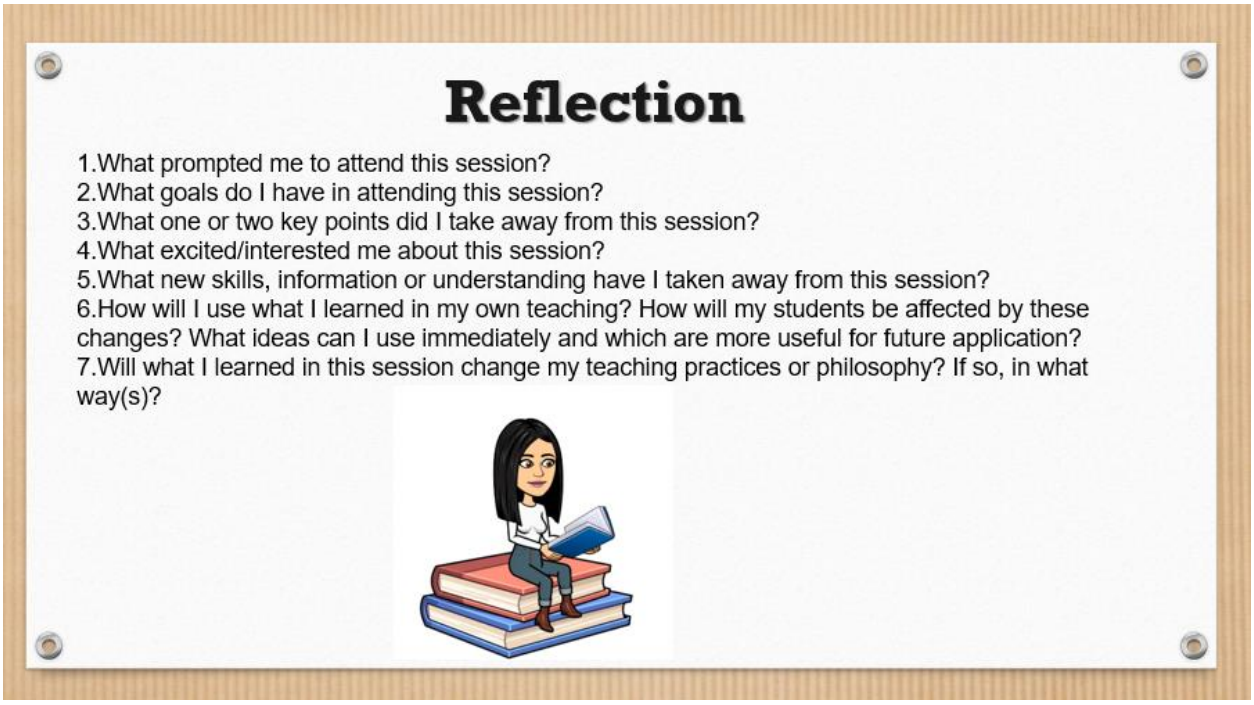

Slide #18

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